(e) the steps taken to ensure that persons belonging to poor and vulnerable sections of the society only benefit from the scheme; and

(f) whether the vigilance mechanism needs to be strengthened and made functional?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) On the basis of poverty estimate of Planning Commission for the year 1993-94 projected on population estimates of Registrar General of India as on 1st March, 2000, number of BPL families in Assam for coverage under TPDS has been worked out as 18.36 lakh. This includes 7.040 lakh AAY families. The Government of Assam has already identified 18.36 lakh BPL families (including 7.040 AAY families) and issued ration cards to them. The Central Government is allocating foodgrains to the State for all the 18.36 lakh BPL families.

(e) Under the TPDS, the identification of Targetted eligible BPL families, issuance of ration cards to them, distribution of foodgrains to them and supervision of FPSs are responsibilities of the State Government. As provided under the PDS (Control) Order, 2001, the State Government has to make proper identification of the beneficiaries by ensuring that all the vulnerable sections of the society are covered within the limits prescribed by the Central Government.

(f) Yes, Sir. The Central Government has directed the State Government to constitute Vigilance Committees at various levels by taking card holders as well as people's representatives as members; these Committees need to be further activated for ensuring smooth functioning of the TPDS. For greater transparency in TPDS operations, a revised Citizen's Charter has been issued in July, 2007 to enable use of provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005 by citizens in relation to functioning of the TPDS.

Coupons for foodgrains to ration card holders

2047. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are going to implement a scheme of providing coupons for foodgrains to ration card holders;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names of States where this scheme is going to be introduced alongwith the date thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Government of India has not decided to implement any scheme of providing coupons for foodgrains to ration card holders. However, Food Coupons have been introduced under the TPDS by some of the State Governments viz. Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Bihar. In this system, counterfoils of receipts coupons are retained by the Fair Price Shop dealers while issuing TPDS commodities to the beneficiaries. The retained counterfoils/coupons are then

deposited with Food & Civil Supplies Department Offices. The Department Staff then verify lifted quantities of ration commodities from Fair Price Shops. This increases accountability and transparency in functioning of Fair Price Shops.

Outlay on food subsidy

2048. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the increase in the proposed outlay on food subsidy is only 6.2 per cent inspite of the inflationary pressure on prices and no attempt is made to resort to a universal PDS since the targeted PDS has a limited reach;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons identified; and

(c) the steps being taken to improve the Situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) The budget allocation for food subsidy for 2006-07 (Revised Estimates) was Rs. 24203.92 crore, while the allocation for 2007-08 (Budget Estimates) is Rs. 25696.20 crore, showing an increase of 6.2%.

The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was introduced in June 1997 with a view to target the underprivileged sections of the Society, as the earlier Universal PDS did not adequately focus on the hungry and had an urban bias. The revival of universal PDS would result in the TPDS losing its focus on meeting the needs of the poor, since it would require substantial reduction in allocation of foodgrains for all categories of families.

Government of India is committed to meet the requirement of foodgrains under various welfare schemes including TPDS and other welfare schemes being implemented and all necessary steps for the implementation of these Schemes are being taken.

Reduction in quota of foodgrains

†2049. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether quota for the foodgrains of some of the States has been reduced during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof as on date, State-wise;

(c) whether Government have received any requests for not reducing the quota for foodgrains;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.